

occurrence of this species in England was supplied by Mr. Arthur Strickland, in a communication made to the Natural-History Section of the British Association, at its meeting at Newcastle in August 1838, as published in the seventh volume of the Reports. Mr. Strickland stated that "this bird had been unjustly excluded from the catalogue of occasional visitors to this country by late authors, as he could prove on unquestionable authority that it had been killed of late years in more cases than one. The first instance was twelve or thirteen years ago: a bird of this species was seen for some weeks about Hornsea Moor, in the East Riding of Yorkshire; it was some time after presented to the author, in whose collection it is at present, in perfect preservation. Another, in full summer plumage, was killed by a labourer in the fields of James Hall, Esq., of Scarbro, near Beverley, about three years ago, and is now in the possession of that gentleman. Another specimen of this bird is in the collection of Mr. Foljambe, of Osberton, with a label on the case stating it to have been killed near that place. A careful examination of these specimens will, Mr. Strickland has no doubt, prove that this bird is properly separated from the Large Egret of North America, which has been frequently placed in our collections for the British species. To these I may add a notice of one killed in Lincolnshire, but where the specimen is deposited I am not aware; and, lastly, Mr. Frederick Holme sent me the measurements of a specimen shot on the Isis, in Oxfordshire, in September 1833."

Yarrell goes on to state that this beautiful species was included in the Swedish Fauna by Linnæus and Retzius, that it is an accidental visitor to Germany, France, Provence, Italy, Corsica, and Sardinia, and that it is common among the islands of the Grecian archipelago, Turkey, and Hungary. On the authority of H. E. Strickland, it frequents the salt marshes west of Smyrna; and Messrs. Dickson and Ross saw a few at Erzeroum, from the beginning of May till October. Mr. Stevenson, in his 'Birds of Norfolk,' doubts whether the Great White Heron can be fairly included in the Norfolk list; still he states that Mr. Gurney possesses a fine specimen, purchased by him of the late Mr. Thurtell when that gentleman's birds were sold, and, on the authority of Mr. Joseph Clarke, of Saffron Walden, that Mr. Miller once found the wings of a Great White Heron near Yarmouth.

Having shown that the Great White Egret possesses numerous just claims to be enumerated among our accidental visitors, I give an additional note or two by some friends who have seen this bird on the Continent, which, together with quotations from the writings of Jerdon and a few lines from my 'Birds of Australia,' will close my account of this species.

"In Sicily," says Mr. Howard Saunders, "especially around Catania and Syracuse, this fine species is by no means uncommon. In Eastern Spain it is of occasional occurrence; but further west it becomes extremely rare—so much so that only a single example came under my notice in the cotos de Doñana, and my men, who were well acquainted with the smaller species (*H. egretta*), were unable to give me any information respecting it. At Perpignan, just within the French frontier, Dr. Companyo has frequently obtained this species, and he assured me that it bred in the neighbouring marshes of Salces."

In Messrs. Elwes and Buckley's "List of the Birds of Turkey" (*Ibis*, 1870, vol. vi. p. 333), these gentlemen state that the *H. alba* is "very common in the marshes of Macedonia, where we have seen as many as fourteen together. The great size and snowy plumage of this Heron make it a very conspicuous object among the tall reeds or when flapping slowly above them. We cannot say whether it breeds here; but in Bulgaria, though not so numerous, it certainly does. An old male, which was shot in February, had the long plumes of the back, which fall off in summer, fully developed."

Jerdon states (*vide* 'Birds of India,' vol. iii. p. 744):—"The Large Egret is distributed throughout India to Ceylon, extending (if Gould's *Syrmatophorus* be rightly identified with this species) from Europe through most of Asia and Africa to Australia. It is of course abundant in the best-watered districts; but is found everywhere, feeding in rivers and tanks, and roosting on trees. It breeds in company on trees, often in or close to some village, making the usual nest of sticks, and laying three or four eggs of a bluish green colour."

Jerdon has remarked that Bonaparte created great confusion by separating the Egrets with yellow bills from those with black ones, not being aware that the colour of that organ changes with the season. During the period of nesting, the bill is more or less black; at other periods it is bright yellow.

Mr. Swinhoe speaks of the *Herodias alba* inhabiting the neighbourhood of Canton and other parts of China, although he questions the identity of the Chinese birds with those of Europe and India.

During my sojourn in Australia, I not unfrequently came upon a solitary individual of the Great White Egret, but in no instance did I obtain black-billed individuals.

The Plate represents both the summer and winter plumage, the figures being somewhat less than the natural size.